

BERGAMOT WINE co

All Red Wine Club

June 2021

One wine from our Italian Wine Club: VOLCANO JUICE

One wine allocated from our reserve retail collection: Ampeleia 'Un Litro'

Two wines from our June Rebel Grape Society: DEFINING LIEU DIT

Enjoy!

WINE NO. 1 / From our Italian Wine Club: VOLCANO JUICE

Pietro Caciorgna 'Ciauria'

Nerello Mascalese

Etna, Sicily, Italy 2019

GRAPE: NERELLO MASCALESE [neh-REHL-loh MAHS-kah-LEH-zeh]

Sour cherries, herbs and tobacco are hallmarks of Nerello Mascalese, with minerality and smoky ash notes underpinning many of the wines. It is a very late-ripening, heat-loving grape, often hanging late into the harvest season into the middle of October. It is sometimes aided by blending with a little bit of its fellow Etna-natives: Nerello Cappuccio and Nocera. Though they share the same name, Cappuccio is unrelated to Mascalese, and is often used to provide a darker color and deeper richness to Etna Rosso blends.

GROWER: Paolo Caciogna has a foot in Tuscany and the other on Etna, and his heart deep in the soil. Based in Tuscany, the family's Azienda Pietro Caciorgna mainly farms cereals and vegetables, and raises cattle. They grow just 5 acres of Sangiovese. In 2006 Paolo visited his close friend Marco de Grazia at his famous Etna estate, Tenuta delle Terre Nere, and Marco convinced him to acquire a small gem, a one acre vineyard of pre-phylloxera Nerello Mascalese, nearly one hundred years old, own-rooted. Paolo now works with a few such tiny diamonds in the tuff (har!) all near the town of Passopisciaro around 2,500 feet of elevation.

Paolo says "*The land in this area is magical!*" He attributes the mineral soils to grapes which have aromatic finesse and silky and velvety tannins. Soils here are jet black and very porous, with layers of mineral-rich volcanic ash and sand. Paolo's aim with this wine is to make a simpler accessible version of Nerello that captures the 'Ciauria' or 'perfume' of Etna. Winemaking is light-handed, with native fermentation occurring in stainless steel tanks and brief aging- just six months in French oak barrels for an aromatic and light-bodied Nerello that is easy to please.

GLASS: Get yer aromatic volcanic eruption right here, folks. The nose is bombastic with pomegranate, cranberry and mulberry red fruits, slightly smoked red cherries, and a sprinkle of alder-smoked salt. There's even a touch of toasted Panettone, rich and decadent with dried fruits and almond extract. The subtle hint of smoke is so intriguing under the pure and pretty fruit aromas, like basalt shavings and balsamic reduction drizzled over strawberry shortcake, or the heady sweet musk of palo santo. Pour another round of Etna perfume!

SIDE NOTES: Etna translates to "I burn" which it certainly does, erupting on average once a year. Sicilians call the mountain Mungibeddu [mohn-jee-behd-du], which means 'beautiful mountain' in their dialect, in addition to being super fun to say.

WINE NO. 2 / From our reserve retail collection

Ampeleia 'Un Litro'

Grenache + Carignan + Alicante Bouschet

Grosseto, Tuscany, Italy, 2019

GRAPE: GRENACHE [gruh-NAWSH]

Grenache is a very old traveler, traversing the globe as one of the world's most planted varieties. It may originally be Spanish (Garnacha) or may come from Italy's Sardinia (Cannonau); both countries mention a Grenache-ish grape in the 1500s and argue the name comes either from Italian vernaccia for "vernacular" aka "local grape" or from Catalan garnaxa for "regal gown". A Unlitro is a blend of Grenache, Carignan and Alicante Bouschet from coastal Tuscan vineyards at an altitude of 200-300 meters above sea level in an area where the climate is marked by sea breezes and the vines are surrounded by chestnut woods.

GROWER: Two decades ago Elisabetta Foradori (of Trentino fame) and Giovanni Podini saw enormous potential in the mineral-rich hills of the upper Maremma in southern Tuscany. They purchased 120 acres and established Ampeleia in 2002. Now, under the careful guidance of vigneron Marco Tait, who's been with them from the start, Ampeleia has become synonymous with expressive wines and a natural approach in this less heralded part of Tuscany. Biodynamic farming is employed to create a closed cycle where "everything is life and everything generates more life." Biodiversity is fostered through the planting of other cultivars in an attempt to keep the landscape intact.

GLASS: This wine certainly evokes a touch of the Rhone, yet it couldn't be more deliciously Italian. Juicy wild strawberries and warmed red cherries topped with nepitella (wild mint) and a drizzle of balsamic. Crunchy and crushable, layered with garrigue and brambly summer berries. Everyday BBQ wine has never been so darn fine.

Two wines from our June Rebel Grape Society: **DEFINING LIEU DIT**

WINEMAKER INTRODUCTION

Lieu Dits are all over France. It means “said place,” or “named place” and is a way to name a single, unblended site that has distinct attributes without being an official cru or AOC. It stems from France’s land register and is much more agile and flexible than something like a climat in Burgundy, which is a historical vineyard name born out of 2,000 years of debate and scrutiny.

Here in the US, Lieu Dit Winery is something altogether different! Sommelier and wine retailer Eric Railsback (RN74, Michael Mina, Osteria Mozza, Les Marchands, Verve) joined forces with winemaker Justin Willet (Tyler Winery, Arcadian, Wenzlau) to launch the project in 2011. Together they aim to highlight Loire varieties grown in the cool microclimates and marine-based soils of Santa Barbara County. These grapes are native to a cooler part of France, and naturally achieve ripeness at lower sugars, resulting in a style of wine that is right in our wheelhouse:

- Lieu Dit’s Cab Franc comes from a block of massal-selection own-rooted vines planted in the Happy Canyon Vineyard on the eastside of Santa Ynez Valley. This vineyard’s clay loam soil and warmer microclimate develops intense flavor at lower sugars. The fruit is partially whole cluster fermented via native yeast and aged in neutral oak barrels, leading to a fresh, Loire-like style.
- Gamay Noir from the sandy loam soils of Bien Nacido Vineyard in the Santa Maria Valley. Lieu Dit fermented this wine in open top tanks via ambient yeast with partial whole-cluster stem inclusion and whole berries in the fermentation following Cru Beaujolais style. It avoids the classic carbonic or bubblegum character that Gamay can sometimes show.

WINE NO. 3

Lieu Dit

Cabernet Franc

Santa Ynez Valley, California 2019

GRAPE: CABERNET FRANC [kah-behr-neh Frah]

Cabernet Franc runs the gamut, from playing a pedigreed role in luxurious blends from Bordeaux's right bank, to making crispety-crunchety pure energy wines in Anjou and Samur in the Loire Valley. Even within the Loire, Franc shows a wide range: big and burly Chinons to many brighter examples. Regardless, it truly has a distinctive flavor profile from this benchmark region - there is no disguising the savory and downright vegetal nature of the wines.

Many California winemakers are finally looking past the bigger Bordeaux blend-style and to the Loire for inspiration, seeking cool climate sites and picking Franc a little earlier for that edgy veggie brilliance. Franc is also equally enjoyable as an age-worthy and savory serious wine, spicy-crunchy and light bodied, just how we like it.

GLASS:

This is a blast of Cab Franc freshness strong enough to blow your hair back. The aromatics hold nothing back, from decadent blueberry rhubarb compote, to the juiciest sweet mulberry, on to that signature hint-o-jalapeño - thus is the veritable definition of fresh Franc. There's a whiff of franc-incense, rich whole cocoa bean, black pepper, and a very intriguing tug-of-war between the polished velvety mouthfeel and the graphite pencil lead bitter edge, a tension of nice and spice that truly qualifies this as a Loire-style contender.

WINE NO. 4
Lieu Dit
Gamay Noir
Santa Maria Valley, California 2016

GRAPE: GAMAY NOIR [Ga-Māy nwär]

Another burgundy baby tossed out with the bath water, Gamay Noir has been talked about (and bad mouthed) since the 14th century. It was kicked out of its homeland in Northern Burgundy in the 1700s but landed just to the South in the rolling granite hills of Beaujolais (and a bit here and there in the Loire, Savoie and other Alpine refuges.) It still suffers from the stigma of the mass-produced early-drinkin' easy-swillin' Beaujolais Nouveau, but the love of Gamay has persisted.

It still must be clarified that true Gamay in California is not "Napa Gamay," a far more heavily planted Rhone grape which is actually Valdiguie. First planted in California's El Dorado Hills in 2000 thanks to the gumption of Steve Edmunds, there are still only a few vineyards of true Gamay, amounting to less than 10 acres total planted in the entire Golden State.

GLASS:

This is Gamay parading in Pinot's clothing, with all the pretty, lifted fruit aromatics like plush plummy cherry and violets. Complete with a cheeky hint of exotic, stemmy baking spices, this is definitely a Gamay to stump your Burgundy-obsessed friends, and from Santa Maria to boot! While it is overtly perky and plucky with maraschino cherry stems and strawberry puree, there's deeper flavors of cardamom, alpine amaro, iron-rich molasses, and sweet fresh tobacco. And of course, Gamay's signature soft and mouth watering tannins.